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| 1. STATE Maryland COUNTY Baltimore TOWN _____ VICINITY Dist. IV STREET NO. Reisterstown Road ORIGINAL OWNER _____ ORIGINAL USE _____ PRESENT OWNER _____ PRESENT USE _____ WALL CONSTRUCTION _____ NO. OF STORIES _____ | | HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY INVENTORY BA-53 | |
| | | 2. NAME Hannah More Academy DATE OR PERIOD 1832 STYLE _____ ARCHITECT _____ BUILDER _____ | |
| | | 3. FOR LIBRARY OF CONGRESS USE _____ | |
| 4. NOTABLE FEATURES, HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND DESCRIPTION <p>Mrs. Ann Neilson donated the land and \$10,000 for an Episcopal girl's school. It was destroyed by fire in 1857 and rebuilt.</p> <p>Brick colonial style, spacious grounds. It continues as a boarding school and preparatory school for college, under a Board of Trustees and a director.</p> | | | |
| 5. PHYSICAL CONDITION OF STRUCTURE Endangered Interior Exterior | | | |
| 6. LOCATION MAP (Plan Optional) | | | |
| 3. PUBLISHED SOURCES (Author, Title, Pages) INTERVIEWS, RECORDS, PHOTOS, ETC. | | 7. PHOTOGRAPH color slides | |
| | | 9. NAME, ADDRESS AND TITLE OF RECORDER (First HABS Report) E. Frances Offutt HABS COMMITTEE OF BALTIMORE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY DATE OF RECORD July 29, 1965 | |

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION AND PHOTOGRAPHS MAY BE ADDED ON SHEET OF SAME SIZE

Hannah More Academy
Reisterstown, Baltimore County, Maryland

INTRODUCTION

The Hannah More Academy, opened in 1834, was the first Episcopal boarding school for girls in the United States. Although the school closed in 1974, it has left its architectural legacy in a complex of six notable brick buildings, with construction dates ranging from 1858 to ca. 1908, representing the growth of the institution during this period (see Plate A). (A 1½ story locker facility, added to the northeast corner of the complex in 1958, does not contribute to the significance of the Academy.) All the structures which comprise the complex are stylistically related to one another, sharing in the expression of the Georgian mode.

DESCRIPTION

Main Hall, constructed in 1858, is the oldest portion of the complex. It is located in the southwest corner of the complex, with its principal facade facing southwest toward Reisterstown Road (Maryland Route 140). This outstanding example of mid-nineteenth century academic architecture exhibits design elements characteristic of the Georgian Revival. Main Hall stands 5 bays wide by 5 bays deep, and rises 2½ stories over a basement. The building is constructed of brick laid in Flemish bond with glazed headers, separated from its common bond basement by a molded water table. Windows on the two main stories are 6/6 sash set in openings featuring marble lintels with rusticated keystones; the basement is lighted by paired 4-pane casements in openings surmounted by segmental arches of gauged brick. A belt course, six bricks wide, runs between the first and second stories.

The central entrance features a very fine pedimented portico, its dentilled cornice broken by a semicircular fanlight. Fluted pilasters with Corinthian capitals flank the door. The sides of the portico are enclosed, with a molded panel beneath a semicircular-arched window, flanked by pilasters identical to those on the front. The central window on the second story has an elaborate surround, with a broken pediment supported on Ionic columns rising from scroll-shaped consoles with finely carved foliate ornament. Similar ornament enriches the frieze. Above the modillioned building cornice, five pedimented dormers with gothic tracery in their round-arched upper sash stand out from the high gambrel roof.

Fenestration of the gable ends is regular, and defines four bays. Each gable is lighted by a 6/6 sash surmounted by a fanlight and flanked by Ionic columns and sidelights, with outlying quarter-round lights.

The first floor of Main Hall retains significant interior detail, including a fine fireplace surround in the southeast room, considerable woodwork in the northwest room, and the original stair. The rest of the complex has little or no significant interior detail remaining, as a result of alteration, vandalism, and decay.

Wyman Hall, the northwest wing of the complex, was added ca. 1873. It consists of a 2½ story, gable-facade section, 3 bays wide by five bays deep, connected to the rest of the complex by a 6-bay-wide hyphen. The gable-facade section shows Georgian features; it is constructed of brick laid in Flemish bond with glazed headers; a molded water table delineates the full, common-bond basement. The southwest front features a central entrance in a semicircular-arched recess behind a pedimented portico enriched with dentils and supported on Ionic columns. Six-over-six sash windows flank the entrance, and three such windows are arrayed across the second story. In the gable, a 6/6 window set in a round-arched opening of brick elaborated with marble imposts and keystone is flanked by oval windows set in openings with four marble keys.

The five bays of the northwest side of this building are defined by flat-arched brick window openings with projecting brick keys. The three leftmost openings on the first floor are false. At the basement level, an entrance is located in the second bay from the left, under a hip-roofed portico resting on heavy round columns. Three pedimented dormers holding double 6/6 sash appear above the molded cornice.

A stair tower was added to the rear (northeast) gable facade ca. 1907. At the basement level, each of the tower's three sides has an open semicircular arch with marble keystone and imposts. A marble belt course separates this level from the tower above it. The stair is lighted by small, double six-light casements.

A six-bay-wide hyphen connects the gabled section of Wyman with the rest of the complex. The southwest front of this section exhibits typical last-quarter-nineteenth-century features, including 4/4 sash, and fishscale patterned shingles in a cross gable over the two central bays and in the two pedimented dormers which flank it. This section is laid in common bond over a stone basement, with simple flat brick arches defining the window heads.

A demioctagonal stair tower marks the juncture of the Wyman Hall hyphen and Main Hall. The tower features brickwork and detailing identical to Main, and holds a ground-level entrance in a round-arched, fanlight opening. A notable stone panel with a bas-relief festoon is inlaid in the brickwork between the second and third levels. To the right of the tower, a two-bay-wide hyphen repeats the brickwork and window treatment of Main Hall, which it abuts.

Behind Main Hall, a 2½ story "interconnection" building, dating from the last quarter of the 19th century, forms the hub of the complex. Although it is largely obscured by later additions, this structure's common-bond brick walls and patterned wood shingle mansard roof remain visible on the northwest and southeast elevations of the complex.

The three remaining buildings, known as Rear, Neilson, and Lawrence, were apparently added during the period 1895-1908. Rear is attached to the northeast side of the interconnection structure, and stands 2½ stories high, 7 bays wide, and 3 bays deep. The seven bays of the northeast front are arranged in groups of 2-3-2, with the two bays at each end more closely spaced in relation to one another than to the three central bays. The building is of brick laid in Flemish bond with glazed headers. A molded water table defines

the basement. Basement windows are placed in segmental arched openings; window openings on upper stories have flat-arched marble heads with pronounced keystones. The transomed central entrance is sheltered by a pedimented portico resting on heavy round Colonial Revival columns. Above the modillioned building cornice, seven evenly spaced pedimented dormers holding 6/6 sash pierce the metal-clad gambrel roof. The northwest gable holds a window set in a round-arched recess, flanked by quarter-round lights.

Lawrence is located just east of Rear, and like Rear, faces northeast. Its facade is composed of 5 bays, grouped 1-3-1, with an entrance located in the rightmost bay on the ground floor. It stands $2\frac{1}{2}$ stories in elevation and 3 bays deep, constructed of Flemish-bond brick with glazed headers, with a molded water table, and a six-brick belt course between the first and second stories. Window heads are marble, in the form of a keystone flat arch. Four gabled dormers appear on the northeast slope of the roof. The southeast gable has a large, round headed window in an arched brick opening featuring marble impostes and keystone. The northwest gable is lighted differently: it holds a small round-arched window with Gothic tracery in its upper sash, flanked on either side by a small 4/4 window with a marble lintel.

The $1\frac{1}{2}$ story locker wing constructed in 1958, is attached to the northeast corner of Lawrence. There is no internal connection between the buildings. The locker wing, while similar in design to the other buildings, is not in scale with them and does not contribute to the significance of the complex.

Neilson is attached to the southwest side of Lawrence. It is a $2\frac{1}{2}$ story, Flemish bond brick building, 7 bays deep (grouped 3-1-3). Its southwest gable features a central, second-story balcony in a round-arched opening flanked by windows. To the southwest, a collonaded proch (later enclosed) joins Nielson with Main Hall.

Adjacent to the complex on the northwest stands St. Michael's Church, a frame Gothic Revival structure designed by John Weller Priest, erected in 1853 to facilitate worship by the students at the Academy. The chapel is listed in the National Register.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Hannah More Academy is significant in the areas of history and architecture.

As the first Episcopal school for girls established in America, and which remained in operation for 140 years, the Academy is of unique importance in the educational history of the State and nation.

The building complex is significant as an outstanding, well-preserved example of late 19th- early 20th century academic architecture. The present form of the Academy reflects the growth and the functional evolution of the school over more than half a century; through these numerous expansions, the architectural unity of the complex has been achieved by adherence to a Georgian theme, connoting a conservative dignity and respectability appropriate to an institution of this type.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

Hannah More Academy opened in 1834 as the first Episcopal boarding school for girls in the United States. It was established by means of a bequest from Mrs. Ann Van Bibber Neilson daughter of a prominent Baltimore merchant and shipowner, inspired by the work of Hannah More (1745-1833), an English author and educator of poor women.

In 1853, St. Michael's Chapel (listed on the National Register) was erected on the Academy grounds, to facilitate the founder's objective of religious instruction. (See B4-256)

The original school building, which had accommodated 15 to 20 students, was destroyed by fire in 1857, and replaced in 1848 by an expanded facility housing 40 (Main Hall). The institution prospered and grew steadily through the remainder of the 19th century. In 1873, the Academy became the Maryland Diocesan School of the Episcopal Diocese; a new building (Wyman Hall) was probably added at this time. Additional construction and renovation took place between 1895-1908, during which time the central building complex achieved much of its present appearance. A small wing housing locker facilities was added in 1958.

The Academy succumbed to the burden of a large debt and closed in 1974, shortly after merging with nearby St. Timothy's School. Baltimore County purchased the campus from the Diocese of Maryland in 1978, and plans to remodel the central complex for use as a senior citizen's center.

BOUNDARIES:

As indicated on the attached sketch map, the historically significant boundaries of the Hannah More Academy are defined on the west by Reisterstown Road; on the south by the existing property line; and on the east and north by a paved driveway running through the property. These boundaries encompass the remaining 19th century setting, including many mature trees on the south and west, and the integrally-related St. Michael's Church on the north.

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WIR. E. BUILDING PHOTOGRAPHS

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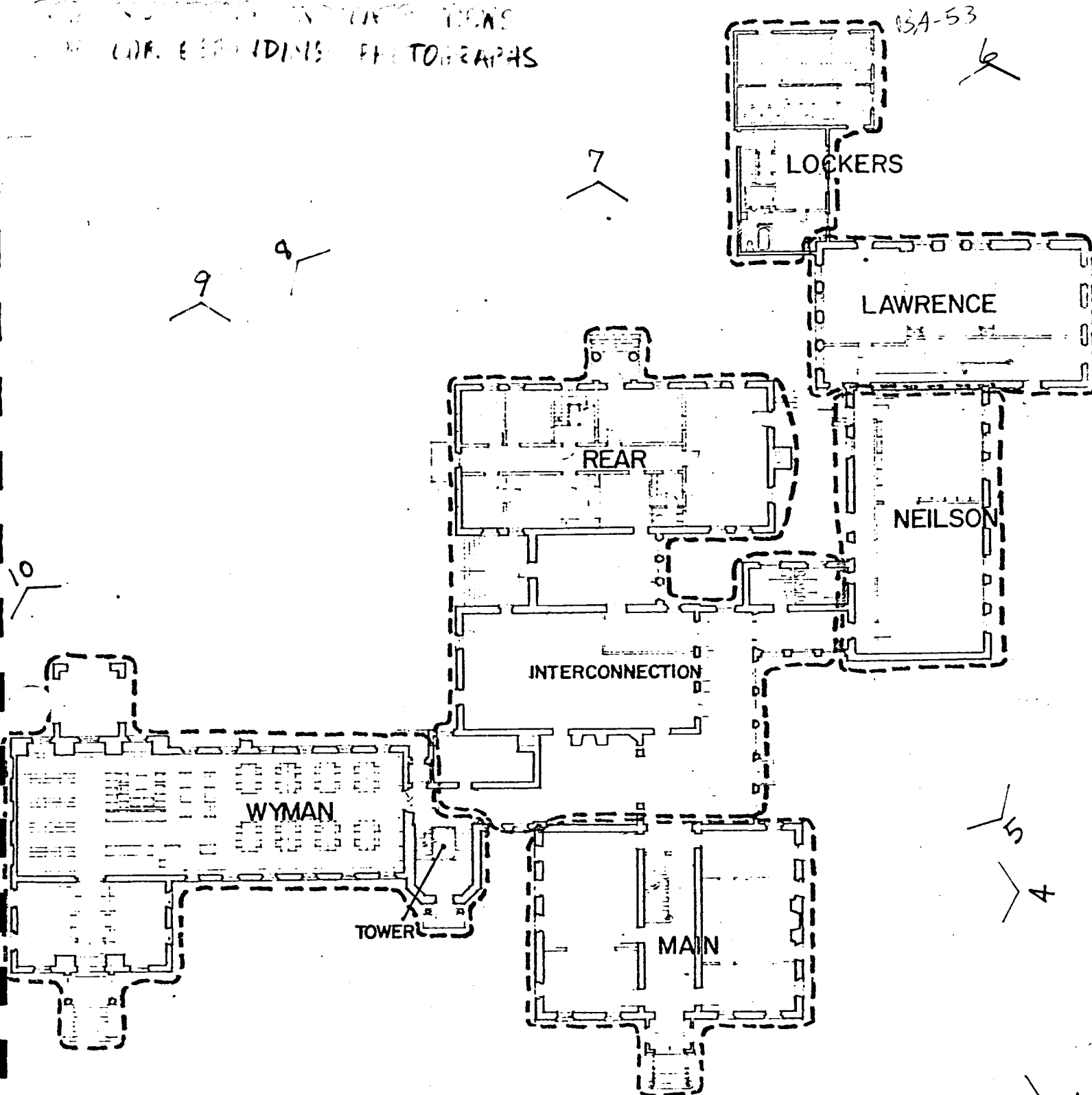
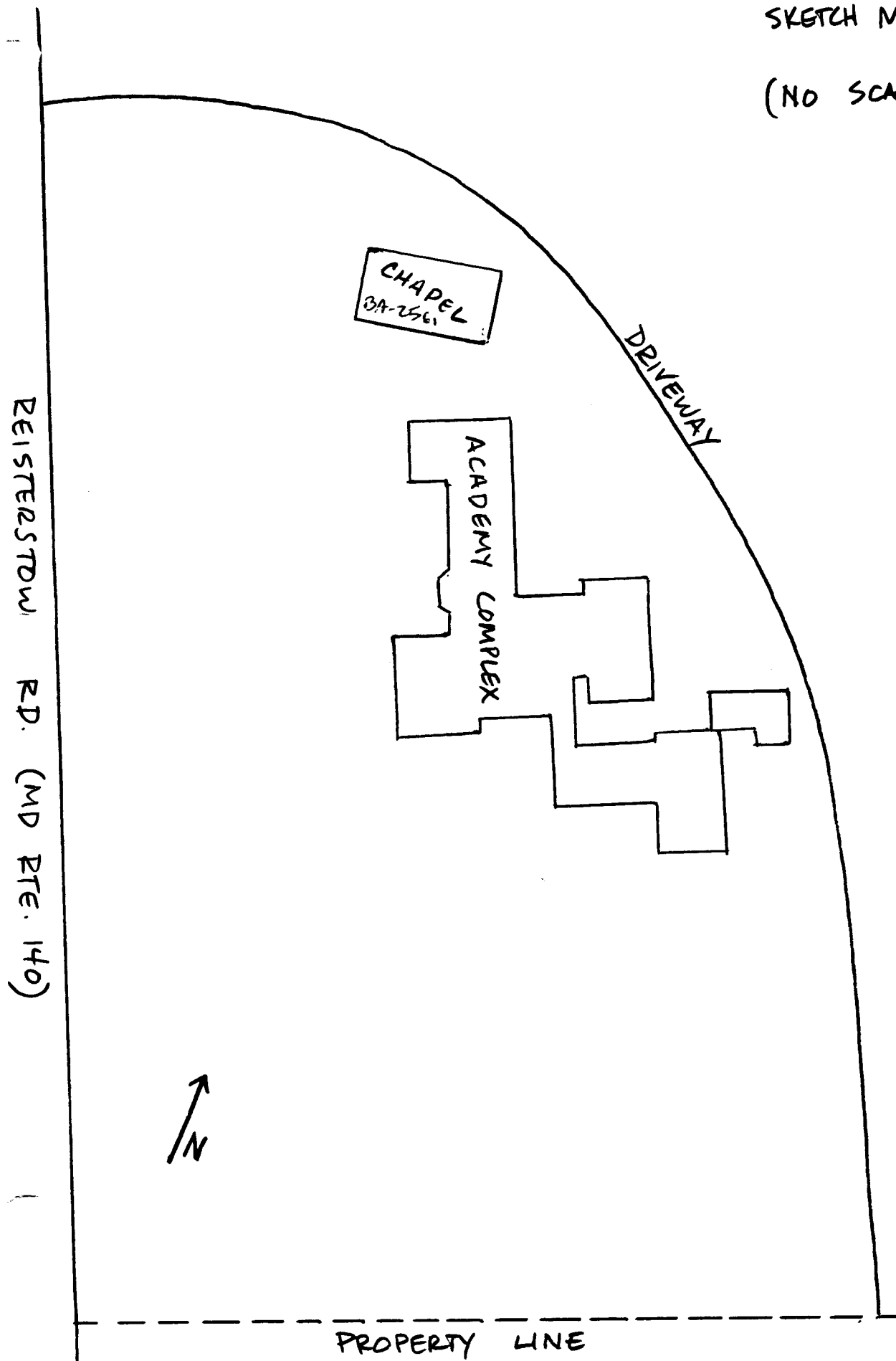


PLATE A

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

HANNAH MORE ACADEMY
REISTERSTOWN MD.

BA-53
SKETCH MAP
(NO SCALE)





Hannah More Academy
Lawrence Building
Northeast facade
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Hannah More Academy

Left to Right: Main Hall (SE gable),

Interconnect, Neilson

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Hannah More Academy
Left to Right: corner of Main, Interconnect,
Neilson, Lawrence
View from Southwest
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Hannah More Academy
Main Hall: SW front, SE gable

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Hannah More Academy
Main Hall, Southwest facade
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Hannah More Academy
Main Hall, entrance detail
View from Southwest
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Hannah More Academy
Wyman Hall hyphen and stair tower
Southwest facade
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Hannah More Academy
Wyman Hall, Southwest facade,
gable-front section

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Hannah More Academy
Left to Right: corner of Rear, Interconnect, Wyman Hall
view from Northwest showing NW facade of
Wyman Hall and stair tower added to NE
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9/20



Hannah More Academy

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Hannah More Academy
Left to Right: corner of Rear, Interconnect, Wyman

View from Northeast
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Hannah More Academy

Rear Building

View from north corner showing NE front
and NW gable; 1958 locker wing and gable
of Lawrence appear to left

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Hannah More Academy
Rear building
Northeast facade

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Hannah More Academy

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H. Nelson

Hannah More Academy

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Hannah More Academy
Main Hall, SW entrance detail

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Hannah More Academy
View from south, showing portico of
Main Hall at St. Michael's Church
in background.

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March 1981

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